Plain and Peaceable ADVICE

To those called

Presbyterians

IN

SCOTLAND.

D1531

£45

By *Alexander Skene.*

Longè diversa sunt carnificina & pietas, nec potest aut veritas cum vi, aut justitia cum crudelitate conjungi.

There is a vast difference betwixt Butchery and Godliness, neither has Truth any concord with Violence, or Cruelty with Righteousness. *Lactan. Milit. lib.* 5. *cap.* 20.

Truth is not propagated by Swords or Spears, nor by Souldiers, but by Perswasion and Counsel. *Athan. Epist. ad Vit. Sel. ag. lib.* 1.

Rom. 12. 18. *If it be possible, as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all men,* &c.

2 Cor. 10. 4. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.*

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Plain and Peaceable ADVICE

To those called

PRESBYTERIANS

IN

SCOTLAND.

TO THE READER.

THe serious sense I have of that necessary Duty by which all Christians are obliged, not only to love one another, but even their Enemies, Mat. 5. 44. and the great Abhorrence they should have against that Spirit of Cain who slew his Brother, hath not only engaged me, and those of my Perswasion, to forsake that principle and practice of Fighting, and to prefer the peaceable way of Christ even under greatest sufferings, Isa. 53. 7. but also moved me to write this ensuing Dissuasive to them whose principle and practice hath drawn on themselves much Sufferings, and occasioned greater Severities to be enacted against the Dissenting Worshippers of God from the National way, then probably would otherwise have been; whereby not only they have met with sad Afflictions, but even others (whose chiefest desire was only to have liberty to Worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth, according to their Consciences) have been made to suffer (these three years and a half by gone) by frequent and long Imprisonments, &c. Though we conceive the Narratives of all these Penal Statutes against Meetings, might sufficiently have guarded those who never were Seditious in practice nor principle.

But if they to whom this is directed, would once at last be induced to that behaviour that is most suitable to the Gospel of Peace, and to the Spirit of true Christianity; it is my hope in the Lord, that he would incline the hearts of our Rulers, both Supreme and Subordinate, to make their Moderation so far known, as to allow a just liberty of Worship to all, whose differences are no ways inconsistent with the Peace and Prosperity of the Nation.

Waiting for this Mercy from the Lord, in his appointed time, I commend this small Endeavour to his Blessing.

The 5th of the
6th mon. 1679.

A. S.

TO

TO THE PRESBYTERIANS IN SCOTLAND.

KNowing that ye look on it as a duty to fight by military weapons in defence of your principle, yea to promote your Cauſe and your pretended Reformation by the power of the Sword, in which ye are confirmed by ſome of your Preachers, who are always labouring to perſwade you to this, as one evidence of your Zeal for God, and not to ſpare to hazard your Lives, Liberties and Eſtates in ſuch a glorious Cauſe, as they call it.

In reference to which, I have found freedom, out of that love I bear to the welfare of your Souls, the peace of our native Country, and that duty of obedience and ſubjection we owe to all that are ſet up in lawful Authority over us, as we are men and Chriſtians, (whether active or paſſive, wherein we cannot with a good conſcience give active obedience) to lay before you theſe following Conſiderations.

1. Conſider how ſhort ye are of that promiſe and Prophecy of Goſpel-times, (when Chriſtians ſhall be recovered out of the Apoſtacy, and come to the primitive Simplicity) which is mentioned *Micah* 4. 2, 3, 4. and *Iſa.* 2. 2, 3, 4. When *many Nations ſhall ſay, Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the Houſe of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths*, &c. *And he will judge among many people, and rebuke ſtrong Nations afar off, and they ſhall beat their Swords*

into

into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks: Nation ſhall not lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn War any more, but they ſhall ſit every man under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree, and none ſhall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.

Where, firſt, this is obſervable, that this promiſe is to be accompliſhed when many Nations ſhall come to own the true God, which was not ſo under the *Moſaical* diſpenſation, till the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt was preached amongſt the Nations, and the *Gentile* World converted to Chriſtianity.

But it may be objected, That Wars were never more amongſt the Nations, then ſince the Nations became by outward profeſſion to own Chriſtianity, and ſo it continues unto this day; To which my ſecond Conſideration ſhall ſerve for Anſwer, thus:

Before the defection from the Simplicity of the Goſpel, in the firſt and pureſt times of Chriſtianity, it was not ſo, as is witneſſed by Doctor *Cave's* Primitive Chriſtianity, citing Teſtimonies out of *Origens* and *Tertullians* Apology, *pag.* 326. *chap.* 2. *pag.* 55. *chap.* 1. where he brings in *Celſus* objecting to *Origen*, that Chriſtians refuſed to help the Emperours in their Wars; *Origen* anſwers, That they did really aſſiſt and help him, and that rather with Divine than humane weapons, according to the command of the Apoſtle, *I exhort, that firſt of all, ſupplication, prayers, interceſſions,* &c. *be made for all men, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority.* And tells him, the more eminent any man is for Piety and Religion, he will be able to afford greater aſſiſtance to his Prince, then a great many Armed Souldiers that ſtand ready to fight for him, and to deſtroy his enemies.

But to clear this further, ſee that famous Letter of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* the *Roman* Emperour, to the Senate of *Rome*, which is recorded in the Works of *Juſtin Martyr* in Latine; Alſo in *John Fox* his Acts and Monuments,

ments, commonly called the *Book of Martyrs*, his first Tome, *pag.* 46. (who though he reports according to *Eusebius*, the Christians to have been a Legion of the Emperours Army, yet the Letter it self shews the contrary: where the Emperour says, *I caused to be sent for these men who were called Christians, who did their endeavour, but without either Weapons, Munition, Armour, or Trumpet, as men abhorring such preparation and furniture, but only satisfied in trust of their God, whom they carry about with them in their Consciences.* And for your sakes I shall set down the Letter at length.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Emperour, to the Senate and People of *Rome.*

I Give you to understand what success I have had in my Wars in Germany, *as also what I intend, and with how much difficulty I have victualled my Camp, being compassed about with seventy and four fierce Dragons, whom my Scouts descried to be within nine miles of us, and* Pompeianus *our Lieutenant hath viewed, as he signified to us by his Letter; wherefore I thought no less, but to be over-run, and all my Bands, of so great a multitude, as well my Way-ward, Main-ward, as Rear-ward, with all my Souldiers of* Ephrata, *in whose Host there were numbered of fighting men, nine hundred seventy and five thousand. But when I saw my self not able to encounter with the Enemy, I craved aid of our Country Gods, at whose hands I finding no comfort, and being driven of the Enemy to an exigent, I caused to be sent for those men whom we call Christians, who being numbred were found a good indifferent number, with whom I was in further rage, then I had good cause, as afterward I had experience by their marvelous power, who forthwith did their endeavour, but without either Weapon, Munition, Armour, or Trumpet,* as men abhorring

horring such preparation or furniture, but only satisfied in the trust of their God, whom they carry about with them in their Consciences.

It is therefore to be credited, albeit we call them wicked men, that they worship God in their hearts; for they falling prostrate on the ground, prayed not only for me, but for the Host also that was with me, beseeching their God for help in that our extremity of lack of Victuals and fresh Water, for we had been now five days without Water, and now in our enemies Land, even in the midst of Germany, *who thus falling upon their faces, made their prayers to a God unknown of me: And there fell amongst us from Heaven a pleasant and cold shower; But amongst our Enemies a great storm of Hail mixed with Lightning; so that immediately we perceived the invincible aid of the most Mighty God to be with us.*

Therefore we give these men leave to profess Christianity, lest perhaps by their prayers we be punished with the like, and thereby make my self the Authour of such hurt as shall be received by the Christian profession; And if any man shall apprehend one that is a Christian, only for that cause I will that he being apprehended, without punishment may have leave to confess the same, so that there be none other cause objected against him, more then that he is a Christian; but let his accuser be burned alive. Neither will I that he confessing and being found a Christian, shall be enforced to alter the same his opinion, by the Governour of any of our Provinces, but left to his own choice. And this Decree of mine, I will to be ratified in the Senate-house, and command the same to be proclaimed and read in the Court of Trajanus. *And that further from thence it may be sent unto all our Provinces, by the diligence of* Veratius, *Governour of our City* Polione. *And further we give leave to all men to use and write out this our Decree, taking the same out of our Copy publickly in the common Hall set forth.*

Accor-

According to *Cluverius* his Latine Epitome of the History of the World, this Emperour began his Reign in the year 162. and died 180. which was about one hundred and twenty years before History reports any thing of a Christian Legion, which may bear this sad and woful remark, (that though it was for a good cause in refusing to worship false Gods) that whole Legion was cut off and perished by the Sword, after they had been twice *decimated*, at last they were all *Massacred* without the least resistance made by them, under *Maximinianus*, Collegue in the Empire to *Diocletian*, who raised the tenth persecution; which makes the words of our Lord good, *Mat.* 26. 52. *Put up thy Sword into his place, for all they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.* However this Scripture may be applied here, I am sure it may be a weighty warning to all private persons, that are not in Authority, to take *up Arms* in defence of their opinions, let your Preachers plead the contrary as they will.

Consider thirdly, let all people walk in uprightness and righteousness towards God and all men, that they may in Faith fully rely upon the Arm of the Almighty, who hath said he will Judge among many people, and rebuke strong Nations afar off: if a person or a people knew the true exercise of Faith in this case, they would say with *David*, Psal. 3. 6. *We will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against us round about.*

O but this were a tempting of God, if the ordinary means should not be used — *Answer.* In no ways, for this is but to beg the question; if weapons and Arms be the true ordinary means in the Gospel-times, when God hath said, *Swords are to be beaten into Plow-shares, and Spears into Pruning-hooks*, &c. See also what the Lord hath said, in confirmation of this truth, *Hosea* 1. 7. *But I will have mercy upon the House of* Judah, *and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by Bow, nor by*

Sword,

Sword, nor by Battel, by Horſes, nor by Horſe-men. So *Hoſ.* 2. 18. When the Lords People have not only forſaken their Idols and Idolatry, ſo as not to have their names any more remembred, as *verſ.* 16, 17. Then *verſ.* 18. *In that day I will make a Covenant for them, with the Beaſts of the Field, and with the Fowls of the Heaven, and with the creeping things of the Earth, and I will break the Bow and the Sword, and the Battel out of the Earth, and will make them lye down ſafely.* The ſureſt ordinary means of defence, is true peace with God, grounded upon faith in him, and a good Conſcience.

Conſider that of *Exod.* 34. 23, 24. Where the Lord ſaid, *Thrice in the year ſhall all your male children appear before the Lord God, neither ſhall any man deſire thy Land, when thou ſhalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.* Now if *Iſrael* of old, that were engaged often even by the Lords allowance, to fight the Lords Battel by Military weapons againſt their enemies, (all which were but typical of the Spiritual Warfare which Chriſtians are to fight) if they at ſuch times were to forbear, and did forbear all outward defence by carnal weapons, at the Word of the Lord, ſaying, *No man ſhall deſire your Land*; How much more ſhould reformed Chriſtians truſt in the Lord, and lean to his defence, who hath ſaid, *I will have mercy on the Houſe of* Judah, *and will ſave them by the Lord their God, and will not ſave them by* Bow, *nor by* Sword, *nor by* Battel, *by* Horſes, *nor by* Horſe-men.

The *Iſraelites* had many malicious enemies round about them, as the *Edomites*, *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Philiſtims*, that of themſelves were ready to wait all opportunities to take advantage againſt them, eſpecially when all their males were gone up to *Jeruſalem*, and all their Land left deſtitute of men for defence; yet it was never found, that any Nation invaded their Land during the time of their Feaſts, till *Titus Veſpaſian* the *Roman* Emperour came with

with his Army whilſt they were in *Jeruſalem*, after they had cauſed the Lord of glory to be Crucified. But then their defence had forſaken them: So long then as the Lords people keeps his way and abides in his truth, and truſts alone in the living God, they need fear no enemy whatſoever: Such as return to the Primitive ſimplicity of the Goſpel in faith and practice, will find all theſe promiſes fulfilled, though others that are not come to that ſtate think fit to uſe Arms.

4. Conſider, if theſe Truths had been believed and received in this Iſland, there had much bloud been ſpared that hath been ſpilt theſe 30 or 40 years by gone, and the deſired Reformation carried on, in a more peaceable and proſperous way then it hath been, as may be ſeen, matters ſtanding as they do at this day. It is wonderful that your eyes are ſo blinded, that ye reflect not, nor look back upon your diſappointments and fruitleſs labour, by your Wars and Fighting, in *pretence* to ſet up *Presbyterian* Government, & in purſuance of Reformation by Arms. I do not queſtion but there have been many of ſeveral ranks, that were engaged ſo in a miſtaken zeal; for truly the way and manner was not approved by the Lord, compelling all by force and violence to comply with you, though contrary to their Judgment and Light. If you pretend a good intention, that will not juſtifie a bad Action, witneſs *Uzziah* his putting forth his hand to the Ark of the Lord, when the Oxen ſhook it, the Lords anger was kindled againſt him, and ſmote him till he died, 2 *Sam.* 6. 7.

5. It were worth your ſerious Conſideration, *that if theſe Preachers* continue to ſtir you up to riſe in Arms, they have not much of ſelf-intereſt in their eye, they being now ſecluded from their places, and that Power and Authority they and their Brethren had, (during our late ſad troubles and Wars in this Kingdom) taken from them, whether therefore they ſeek not to imbroil the Nations in new Wars, rather then ſtill to be thus deprived?

But I conceive it were more ſuitable for them to evidence as much care and zeal, in exciting all perſons and people whom they could influence, to ſearch and try their ways, and to turn unto the Lord God with their whole hearts, and ſeek more after a perſonal Reformation, and after a new Creation in their inward man, then to delude people by ſtirring up a carnal zeal for outward Reformation, when there is no true zeal for real conformity to the Spirit of Jeſus in the heart.

6. Conſider, if the way of Fighting and Arms was a means to ſpread the Goſpel at firſt among the Nations: Chriſt ſent forth his Diſciples as Lambs and Sheep among Wolves, and they by pains, and labour, and ſufferings, did propagate the Goſpel, and will ye imagine to carry on any true Goſpel-work another way? They ſuffered impriſonments, beatings, ſcourgings, ſtonings, and all manner of evil, and will ye by reſiſting *evil* with force and violence, apprehend to promote the Kingdom of Chriſt in theſe Lands? The beſt Arms the Primitive Chriſtians uſed, were *preces & lachrymæ*, prayers and tears; and ſo long as ye make uſe of *Swords* and *Guns*, can ye upon any juſt ground lay claim to be their *Succeſſors*? Remember that the Lords Houſe after the Captivity (which our *Babyloniſh* Captivity under *Popery* reſembled) was not built *by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord*, Zach. 4. 6. Even ſo our Reformation from Antichriſtian Idolatry and Superſtition, whether Root or Branch, is not to be by Sword or Spear; but *the Lord is to conſume it by the Spirit of his Mouth, and ſhall deſtroy him by the brightneſs of his coming*, 2 Theſ. 2. 8. O that ye knew the vertue and power of the Spirit of life and truth, ye would ſoon perceive the folly and vanity of your carnal weapons, and of the Arm of fleſh! wherefore let Chriſt who is the head of the true Church, be the *ſole defender* of his Faith, which he hath wrought in all the true members thereof, elſe acknowledge your Faith

and

and work of Reformation ye pretend too, to be none of Christs, but meerly humane, and therefore must be upholden by the Arm of man.

7. Consider, this your way is liker the Children of Antichrist, then the Disciples of Holy Jesus, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. 2. 23. So his Disciples behaved themselves, 1 *Cor.* 4. 12, 13. *Being reviled* (says *Paul*) *we bless; being persecuted we suffer it; being defamed we entreat; we are made as the filth of the World, and are counted as the off-scouring of all things unto this day.* Thus we may see the frame of that Spirit that was in the Christians of old; They were far from rendring evil for evil, or repelling force with force, *the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds*, 2 Cor. 10. 4.

Whereas it is the Spirit of Antichrist to make use of carnal weapons in defence of false worship, *it was given to him to make war with the Saints, yea to overcome them*, Rev. 13. 7. yet nevertheless *vers.* 19. *He that killeth with the Sword, must be kill'd with the Sword.* This is a retribution threatned and promised to come upon Antichrist, and all that walk in his steps: see his lording way in his forcible impositions, *vers.* 16, 17. He causeth all ranks to bow to him, and receive marks of conformity to him, yea not to have the liberty to buy or sell, or the common privi-ledge of Subjects, except they be such.

Now if ye be so dealt with in any degree at such a time as this, ye should reflect upon your selves, how much this was your own way when power was in your hands, and had the Authority of the Civil Magistrate upon your side; But I wish ye and all others, *that imploy'd* your *power to stir* up the Magistrate to persecute others for matters purely conscientious, to consider how far ye are from any just right to lay claim to the Holy Mountain of the Lord, which is his

Church

Church in Gospel-times, as is Propheſied *Iſai.* 11. 9. *They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my Holy Mountain.* Conſider how far this excludes force and Arms from being inſtruments to defend the Faith of the Goſpel, or to promote it, as now the moſt part of theſe called Chriſtians uſe to do, theſe weapons and means never having been uſed, till the ſimplicity of Chriſtianity began to be loſt, and the Apoſtacy began to creep in. It was the pride and ambition of the Biſhop of *Rome* and his Clergy, and *Arrians*, and *Neſtorians*, that would needs have all men to bow to them, and to conform to their impoſitions, that firſt ſtirred up the Kings and Princes of the Earth to perſecute all whoſe Conſciences could not comply with them; And ſhall ye, who think your ſelves a part of the Reformed Churches, tread their ſteps?

8. Wherefore conſider that place of the Apoſtle, *James* 4. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings amongſt you? Come they not hence, even from your luſts that war in your members?* Is it not evident that all the Wars that have been in the World, have proceeded from no other ground, but either from Pride, Covetouſneſs, Ambition, or Revenge? And if ye ſhall pretend that your fighting is for the cauſe of God, the Apoſtle ſays in plain terms it is not ſo, but from your luſts, even Pride, and Ambition, to have the Preheminence in the Earth, and Revenge againſt them that are your oppoſers; and theſe that pretend to be the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, or people of God, ſhould be aſhamed to be acted by ſuch principles.

9. Conſider whether it be not the ſence of this fighting diſpoſition in you, that has occaſioned the ſeverity of ſuch Acts of Parliament againſt your Meetings for worſhip, whereby not only ye, but thoſe who are Innocent, and altogether abhorrent from ſuch principles of fighting, are made to be ſufferers, by frequent and long Impriſonments, and to undergo Fines and poindings: whereas if ye had been as peaceably diſpoſed,

diſpoſed, as others are under theſe ſufferings, it might have pleaſed the Lord to have moved the hearts of our Superiours to have reſented from theſe ſeverities; And though ye had remained under ſad ſufferings when Innocent, ye ſhould have had a ſhare of that peace and comfort with others, that it was purely for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, that wiſheth no Evil to any man.

Wherefore as ye would ſhew your ſelves to be a people anſwering the Propheſies and Promiſes of Goſpel-times, *Micah* 4. 2, 3, 4. *Iſa.* 2. 2, 3, 4. *Iſa.* 11. 9. and 65. 25. As ye would approve your ſelves Chriſtians according to the Innocency thereof in primitive times, and to be their true and real Succeſſors; As ye would evidence your ſelves to be a righteous people, that can truſt and rely upon the Lord God alone, for the preſervation of the whole Intereſt of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of your own perſonal intereſts in time and Eternity: As ye would not wiſh theſe Nations to be again involved in blood and confuſion: As ye bear a love to the peace of your native Country; as ye would be free from that imputation of building up *Sion* with blood, (which was never juſtly imputed to the true Diſciples of Chriſt, nor primitive Chriſtians, though under greateſt ſufferings, and though for their power, able ſufficiently to defend themſelves;) As ye would wiſh not to manifeſt your ſelves to be the brats of the Antichriſtian Whore, who is ſtill drunk with blood, yea with the blood of the Saints, by her not ceaſing to ſtir up the powers of the Earth, to perſecute all who will not come under her mark and name: And as ye would not wiſh to be acted by a ſpirit of luſt, pride and revenge, lay aſide your Arms and fighting principles, and commit God's work to his own Government, and follow peace with all men, and holineſs, *without which none ſhall ſee the Lord*; and commit your cauſe unto God, and *let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to Him in well-*

well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, 1 Pet. 4. 19. And in this only will be your strength and peace.

Remember *David* was not permitted to build a House unto the Lord, because he had shed much blood upon the Earth; that work was reserved for *Solomon*, who was a man of peace, 2 *Sam.* 22. 8, 9. Wherefore do not dream, neither be perswaded by men, that ever the Lord will honour *Men of War and Blood*, to [illegible] the Gospel of peace.

Take this from one, who with many of his [illegible] hath been a sufferer for his Conscience these dive[illegible] bygone, with whom these blessed Promises and Pro[illegible] above-mentioned, are begun to be accomplished, both in our principle and practice; Though we are a people against whom ye have much causeless prejudice and malice, through the many gross misrepresentations of our opposers; yet I am, and hope ever to remain,

A real well-wisher of your

Souls, and of all Men,

AL. SKENE.

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